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Letter dated 28 December 2006 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 28 December 2006, addressed to you by His Excellency Mr. Kemal Gökeri, Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, forwarding a letter dated 25 December 2006 from His Excellency Mr. Turgay Avci, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 19, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kerim **Uras**
Deputy Permanent Representative
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the letter dated 28 December 2006 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to convey herewith a letter dated 25 December 2006 addressed to you by H.E. Mr. Turgay Avci, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (see enclosure).

(*Signed*) M. Kemal **Gökeri**
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

Enclosure

25 December 2006

It has come to my attention that the Greek Cypriot administration has speeded up its rearmament efforts, especially within the framework of the "Joint Military Doctrine" with Greece. This development is of particular disappointment to us since all efforts should be concentrated on creating a reconciliatory atmosphere between the two sides. On the one hand, the Greek Cypriot administration claims that it is "for a solution" in the island, while on the other it continues to arm itself with the purchase of sophisticated weaponry in addition to restructuring and modernizing its military build-up facilities. In this context, I would like to bring to your attention the following recent developments on the issue.

In the course of its rearmament program, the Greek Cypriots purchased 12 Mil-MI 35 type Russian-made assault helicopters in 2001, Israeli-made spy planes in 2002 and around 50 M48 MOLF tanks have been transferred to the Greek Cypriot National Guard (GCNG) from Greece in 2004. It should also be noted that according to the daily *Politis* dated 19 December 2005, the U.S. State Department accused Greece for unauthorized selling and granting of US origin defence material to a third party, namely the Greek Cypriot administration, which is a violation of U.S. defence sales regulations.

The same news item reported that the Greek Cypriot administration decided to replace the US origin M 48 tanks and 155 mm. howitzers and cited that over 200 million US dollars from the 2006 budget has been allocated to replace the US origin weaponry with new weapon systems.

The Greek Cypriot administration's total military expenditure for 2006, which is over 400 million US dollars, on its own reveals the fact that its true intention is not reconciliation but the bolstering of its military capability. It is reported in the Greek Cypriot daily, *Cyprus Mail*, dated 22 February 2006, that the defence budget included arms spending in excess of 430 million dollars. Such excessive expenditure surely raises serious doubt regarding the sincerity of the Greek Cypriot leadership when it claims it is committed to a settlement. It also runs contradictory to the South's claim that it is working to improve the political climate in Cyprus. As Your Excellency has rightly put it "words and deeds" need to match.

The massive amounts of money allocated in the 2007 budget for military purposes, including new arms purchases, modernization and reconstruction of facilities has also been made public in the Greek Cypriot press. The Greek Cypriot administration is planning to purchase 41 additional Russian-made T-80 type tanks and around 10 MI-35 attack helicopters from the Russian Federation through Russian company "Rosaporanexport". Within the framework of its modernization facilities, GCNG has completed the installation of night vision system to 27 T-80 U tanks in 2005 and is planning to install the same system to its MI-35 attack helicopters in line with the contract signed with the aforementioned Russian company.

Additionally, the Greek Cypriot administration signed an agreement with the Chinese state company named "NORINCON" for the purchase of around 70 PLZ45 155 mm. self-propelled gun-howitzers in October 2005. The agreement had been suspended for a period of time over bribery allegations within the Greek Cypriot National Guard personnel. However, it has been recorded in the Greek Cypriot daily, *Politis*, of 30 November 2006, that a new deal is soon to be concluded and during the recent visit of the company officials to South Cyprus, negotiations took place on the financial aspect of the agreement concluded in 2005. It is also reported in the same news item that the planned purchase of arms system from China would cost around 100 million US dollars. We are also aware that the Greek Cypriot administration has allocated millions of US dollars for the purchase of different types of tanks, large amounts of howitzers and rocket launchers in its defence budget for 2007 and already signed contracts with French and Swiss companies for increasing the target hit capability of Aspide and Mistral missiles.

It is also noteworthy that, in addition to its military build-up, the Greek Cypriot administration has unilaterally brought to an end the understanding prevailing since 2001 to cease military exercises and began conducting Nikiforos military exercise again in October last year. Continuing with its irresponsible attitude, the Greek Cypriot administration conducted the Nikiforos military exercise this year too, between 10-15 October, with the participation of all GCNG groups, as well as thousands of reservists and militiamen. As was the case in previous years, the provocative exercise entailed attack scenarios against the territory of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and the aim was declared to

be "the occupation of Northern Cyprus". According to the Greek Cypriot dailies, *Politis* and *Filelefitheros*, of 15 October 2006, during the large scale manouvers, the Greek administration displayed an array of sophisticated weapon systems, such as, Russian-made T-80 and French-made AMX30-B2 type tanks, Russian-made MI-35 assault helicopters and French-made Gazelle type helicopters equipped with Hot and Milan anti-tank missiles. According to the same news items, live ammunition was used and anti-tank missiles were launched from helicopters and tanks during the maneuver.

Taking this opportunity, I would also like to express the Turkish Cypriot side's discontent concerning reports that the Greek Cypriot administration and France are close to concluding a bilateral military agreement. The press reports record that the agreement involves cooperation in various areas, including French use of the Andreas Papandreou Airbase in Paphos and ports in the southern part of the island and may also include joint military exercises. As Your Excellency is well aware, according to the international agreements of 1959-1960, Turkey, Greece and Britain are the guarantor states in Cyprus and any other military arrangement or presence on the island is subject to the consent of all related parties. Under these agreements, the Greek Cypriot administration does not have any authority to enter into treaty commitments on behalf of the whole island. As the Turkish Cypriot side, we hope that France will refrain from entering into military arrangements with South Cyprus in flagrant violation of the said international agreements.

It is unfortunate that the Greek Cypriot administration is taking provocative steps, which are likely to lead to tension and insecurity in the island, particularly at a time when the Turkish Cypriot side is doing its utmost for paving the way towards reconciliation. Our expectation is that the Greek Cypriot administration of Southern Cyprus would abandon its counter-productive policies and start contributing to the building of confidence in the island for a lasting and comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem under Your Excellency's mission of good offices.

(*Signed*) Assoc. Prof. Turgay **Avci**
Deputy Prime Minister and
Minister for Foreign Affairs